

Prof. WILLIAM CHAUVENET, U. S. Naval Academy.
 DANIEL KIRKWOOD, of Pottsville, Pa.
 Prof. FRANCESCO CAV. ZANTEDESCHI, of Padua.

Stated Meeting, May 2.

Present, twenty-three members.

Dr. FRANKLIN BACHE, Vice-President, in the Chair.

Dr. Thomas S. Kirkbride, Dr. Caspar Morris, Dr. William Pepper, Mr. Jacob G. Morris, Mr. Stephen Colwell, and Rev. Dr. Boardman, recently elected members, were presented and took their seats.

Letters were read:—

From Isaac Hazlehurst, dated Philadelphia, April 19; Rev. Henry A. Boardman, dated Philadelphia, April 21; Dr. Joseph Pancoast, dated Philadelphia, April 22; William Chauvenet, dated Annapolis, Md. April 22; Dr. Thomas D. Mutter, dated Philadelphia, April 24; and Robert Patterson, dated Philadelphia, April 26, respectively acknowledging the receipt of notice of their election as members of this Society:—

From the Royal Society of Sciences at Göttingen, dated 9th February, 1851, acknowledging the receipt of Nos. 43 and 44 of the Proceedings of this Society:—and

From the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester, dated Society's Rooms, George street, April 8th, 1851, acknowledging the receipt of the Proceedings of this Society.

The following donations were announced:—

FOR THE LIBRARY.

- Journal Asiatique. IV Série. Tome XVI. Paris, 1850. 8vo.—
From the Asiatic Society of Paris.
 Annales des Mines. Tome XVIII. 4 & 5 Livraisons de 1850. Paris.
 8vo.—*From the Engineers of l'Ecole des Mines.*
 Quarterly Journal of the Geological Society. No. 18. May 1, 1849.
 London. 8vo.—(Not previously received).—*From the Society.*

- Abhandlungen der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen. IV Band. für 1848—50. Göttingen, 1850. 4to.—*From the Royal Society of Sciences at Göttingen.*
- Nachrichten von der Georg-Augusts-Universität, und der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen. Vom Jahre 1850. Nos. 1—17. Göttingen. 8vo.—*From the same.*
- Annals of the Lyceum of Natural History of New York. Vol. V. No. 2. April, 1851. 8vo.—*From the Lyceum.*
- Proceedings of the Boston Society of Natural History. Vol. III. (From page 337 to end of Volume, with Title-page and Index to Vol. III.) Boston. 8vo.—*From the Society.*
- Memorials of Columbus: Read to the Maryland Historical Society, by Robert Dodge, April 3, 1851. Baltimore. 8vo.—*From the Society.*
- The African Repository. Vol. XXVII. No. 4. April, 1851. Washington. 8vo.—*From the American Colonization Society.*
- Proceedings of the Royal Institution of Great Britain. No. 3. March 7 to 21, 1851. London. 8vo.—*From the Institution.*
- Journal of the Franklin Institute. 3d Series. Vol. XXI. No. 4. April, 1851. Philadelphia. 8vo.—*From the Institute.*
- Uranus: Synchronistisch geordnete Ephemeride aller Himmelserscheinungen des Jahres 1850; 2, 3, and 4 Quartale; und 1 Semester, 1851. Herausgegeben von der Königlichen Sternwarte zu Breslau. Breslau. 8vo.—*From Professor Boguslawski.*
- Populäres Astronomisches Hand-Wörterbuch, oder versuch einer alphabetisch geordneten Erklärung der vornehmsten Begriffe und Kunstwörter der Astronomie, &c. Von Dr. Joseph Emil Nürnberger. Parts 14 to 19, inclusive, completing the work. 8vo. *From Dr. J. G. Flügel, U. S. Consul at Leipsic.*
- Congratulatory Address to Dr. Nürnberger on his Fiftieth Anniversary. Transcribed by Dr. J. G. Flügel, for the Society. MSS. *From the same.*
- A Proposal to establish and maintain One Uniform System of Weights, Measures and Coins, among all Civilized and Commercial Nations. By Peter A. Browne, LL.D., of Philadelphia. New York, 1851. 8vo.—*From the Author.*
- Ephémérides des Mouvements Célestes pour le Méridien de Paris. Tome Septième; contenant les dix années de 1775 à 1784. Revisées et publiées par M. de la Lande, de l'Académie Royale de Paris. Paris, 1774. 4to.—*From J. F. Frazer.*

Ephemerides Anno Virginei Partus, 1500. (No imprint.) 4to.
From the same.

A Catalogue of the Subscription Library at Kingston upon Hull, established in December, 1775. Liverpool, 1822. 8vo.—*From the same.*

By-laws of the Pennsylvania State Lunatic Hospital at Harrisburg, with the Acts of the Legislature establishing the same. Harrisburg, 1851. 8vo.—*From Charles B. Trego.*

The Medical News and Library. Vol. IX. No. 101. May, 1851. Philadelphia. 8vo.—*From Blanchard & Lea.*

United States Exploring Expedition, during the Years 1838, 1839, 1840, 1841, 1842, under the Command of Charles Wilkes, U. S. N. Vol. XI. Meteorology, by Charles Wilkes, U. S. N. Philadelphia, 1851. 4to.—*From the Author.*

The American Journal of Science and Arts. Second Series. No. 33. May, 1851. New Haven. 8vo.—*From Profs. Silliman and Dana, Editors.*

Mr. Du Bois exhibited a number of specimens of metallic currency, for the inspection of the members.

1. Silver coin of the caliph, *Haroun Alraschid*, renowned in Arabian history and romance. This well preserved and rare specimen was lately presented to the Mint collection, by John P. Brown, Esq., drogoman to the United States Embassy at Constantinople. It bears no effigy of the caliph, or picture of any kind, owing to a rigid construction, by the Mussulmans, of the second Mosaic commandment, by which they abstain from "making the likeness of any thing," for any purpose. Instead of such emblems, the coin is covered on both sides with Arabic inscriptions, chiefly texts from the Koran, with a fanciful, dashing script, peculiar to the Mohammedan coins of that day. On one side we read in the centre—"There is no God but one God, to whom there is no Fellow." And around this—"In the name of God, this dirhem was coined in the City of Peace (Bagdad), in the year 188," that is, 803 of the Christian era.

On the reverse, the central inscription reads—"Mohammed is the messenger of God." Around this is the legend, "Mohammed is the messenger of God, whom he sent as the director of the true religion, that he might elevate it above all religions, however much the *Associators* should be displeased by it." The term *Associators* was applied by Mahomed to the Christians, in respect to the doctrine of the

Trinity, and probably, also, to the divine honours paid to the Virgin Mary in the Greek Catholic church, to which he was neighbour.

The occasion of this peculiar feature of Arabian coinage (*Cufic* coinage as it is called by numismatists) is detailed by Arabian writers, and is here gathered from Marsden, in his *Numismata Orientalia*.

Until the year of the Hegira, 76, or A. D. 695, the Mahomedan empire had no coinage of its own, relying upon what was already current in the country, especially of the Greek-Roman issue, from Constantinople. But the caliph Abdalmalek having adhered to the practice of commencing his epistles to the Roman Emperor with the formulary—"There is but one God, and Mohammed is his prophet"—the latter took offence at what appeared to him an insult, or at least a disparagement of the faith he professed, and threatened to retaliate, by introducing inscriptions upon the coinage which would not be agreeable to the professors of Islamism. The effect of this unwise controversy was such as might have been expected. The caliph took measures for establishing an orthodox mint of his own, and commenced a coinage in A. D. 695.

It should be added, that the denomination of this coin, dirhem, is a change of the ancient Greek word drachm. The average value of the Arabic dirhem was about twelve cents. The silver appears to be of a high grade of fineness.

The coin is as yet scarcely known in this country, and is very rare even in Europe, especially in such fine preservation: yet it is remarkable that two such pieces have been dug up of late years in different places in England, where they were probably carried by returning crusaders.

2. Specimens of private mintage in California, ten and five dollar pieces. They so closely resemble the national coin, as to be properly considered counterfeits; with this remarkable feature, however, that they are nearly or quite equal to the genuine issue in value. As the idea of *counterfeiting* seems almost necessarily to include that of *debasement*, or fraud, this unique characteristic renders the pieces highly interesting. The difference in the market price of gold bullion at San Francisco and at Philadelphia, is the easy solution of the circumstance.

3. Three varieties of gold rings, made in the interior of Africa from the gold of that country. The largest of them only is a novelty; and that on account of its massiveness, being worth about 110 dollars. The smallest has a value of only 60 cents. They are understood to serve the double purpose of ornament and currency; but

the large one must have been a crown jewel, rather than a veritable pendant for the ear or nose.

On motion, the use of the Hall was tendered to the Association of Medical Superintendents of Hospitals and Asylums for the Insane, for the purpose of holding their proposed meetings.

Stated Meeting, May 16.

Present, fifteen members.

JUDGE KANE, Vice-President, in the Chair.

Mr. Robert Patterson, recently elected a member, was presented, and took his seat.

Letters were read:—

From Dr. William Shippen, dated Philadelphia, 15th May, 1851, acknowledging the receipt of notice of his election as a member of this Society, and declining the acceptance thereof: and—

From the Cambridge Philosophical Society, dated Cambridge, 1st January, 1851, announcing the transmission of their Transactions, Vol. IX. Part 1, as a donation to this Society.

The following donations were announced:—

FOR THE LIBRARY.

Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London, for the Year 1850. Part 2. London, 1850. 4to.—*From the Royal Society.*

List of the Council and Fellows of the Royal Society, Nov. 30, 1850. 4to.—*From the same.*

Astronomical, and Magnetical and Meteorological Observations, made at the Royal Observatory, Greenwich, in the Year 1849, under the direction of George Biddell Airy, Esq., M.A., Astronomer Royal. London, 1850. 4to.—*From the same.*

Results of Observations made by the Rev. Fearon Fallowes, at the Royal Observatory, Cape of Good Hope, in the Years 1829,